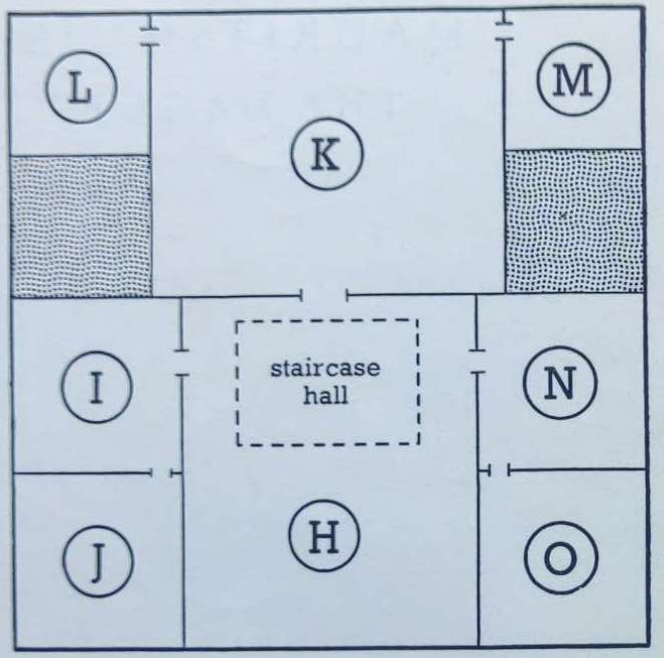
MAURITSHUIS
THE HAGUE

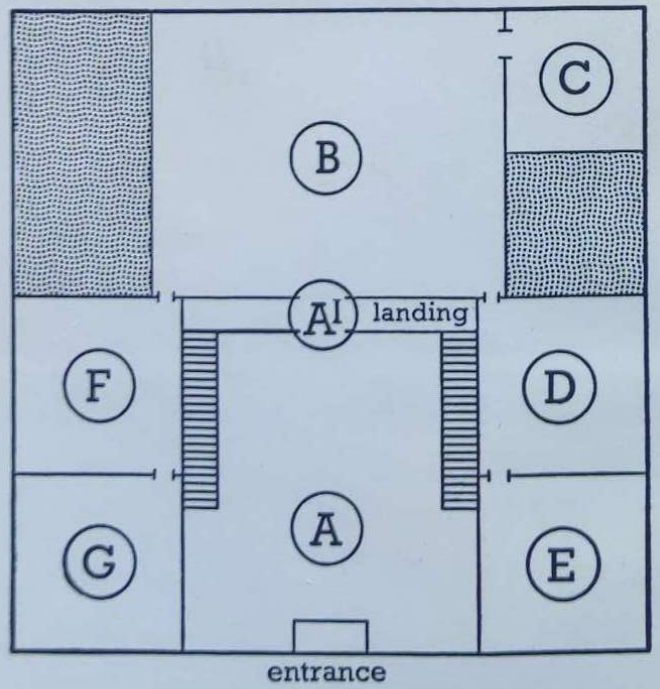
Illustrated guide

MAURITSHUIS

THE HAGUE

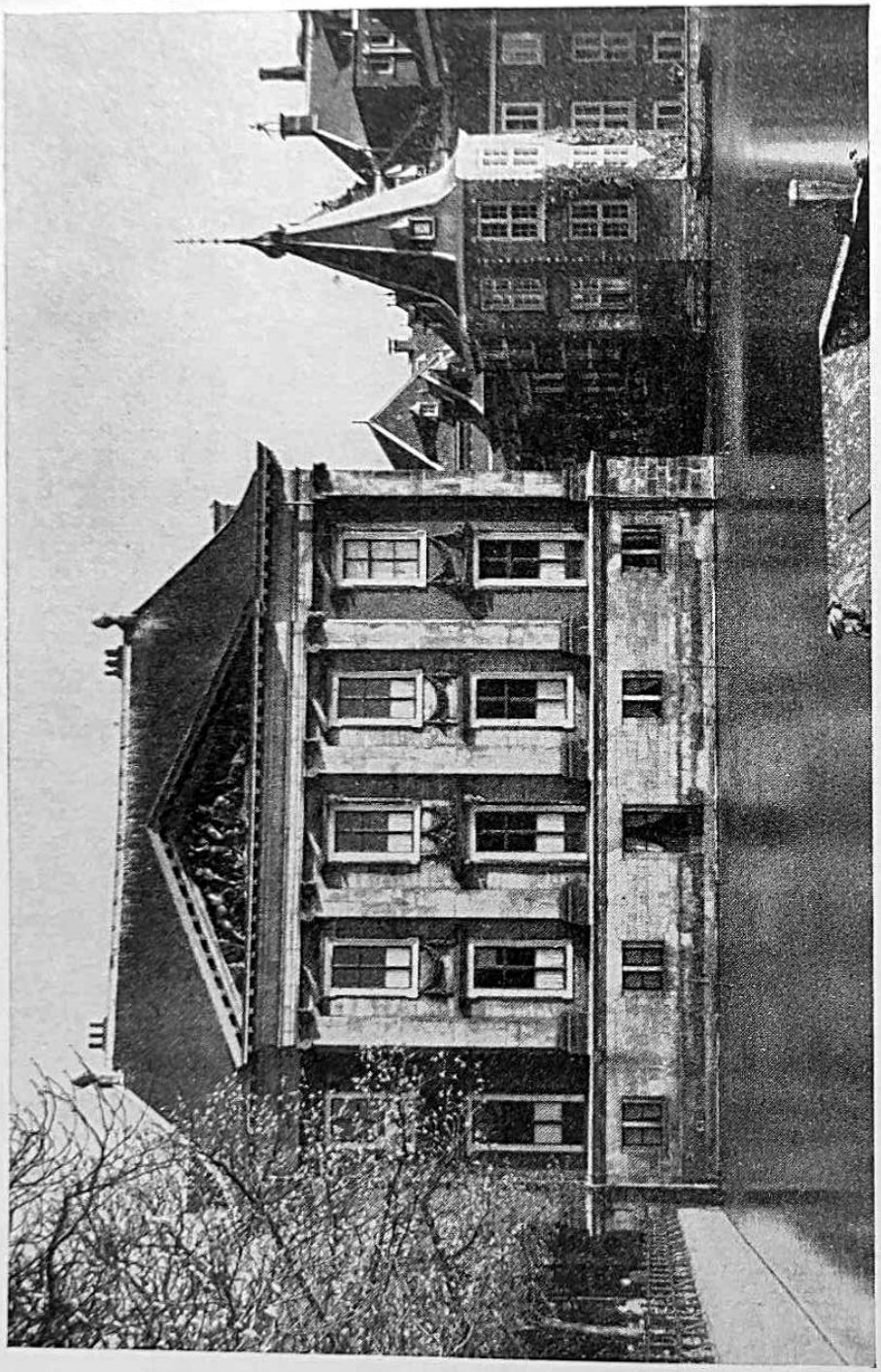
II
First floor





I
Ground floor

Adriaen van Ostade (1610–1685)
The violinist

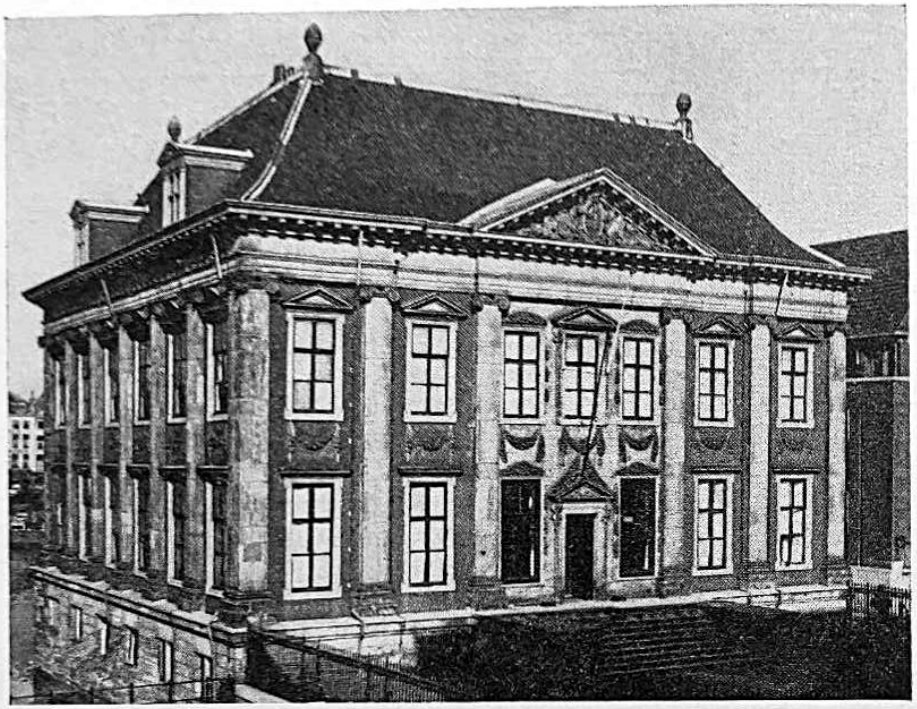


text nr. 1

A TOUR OF THE ROYAL PICTURE GALLERY MAURITSHUIS, THE HAGUE.

1. THE BUILDING.

The Mauritshuis is not only a gallery with a world famous collection of old Dutch and Flemish paintings; the building itself is an object of interest and a historic monument. In the neighbourhood of the Binnenhof, which was originally established as a stronghold of the Dutch Counts and where the Stadtholder-Princes later lived, a number of stately dwellings had arisen since the end of the Middle Ages. Here dwelt the leading families, who were in close contact with the Court. Even to-day the majority of the houses around the Hofvijver bear the stamp of olden times. A considerable number of the houses date from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The most prominent is the Mauritshuis which, half encircled by water, stands next to the Binnenhof. It bears the name of the first occupant, Prince Johan Maurits of Nassau Siegen (1604—1679), a great-nephew of the Stadtholders Maurits and Frederik Hendrik. From 1637—1644 he was the governor of Brazil, which was for a short time a Dutch colony. Between 1633 and 1644 he had the building erected by Pieter Post after the plans of Jacob van Campen. It is one of the earliest examples in the Netherlands of a palace built in the classical style. With its architecture inspired by Antiquity and its balanced proportions, it forms a striking contrast to the high narrow houses with ornamental façades to which the Dutch of those days were accustomed. This new architectural style originated in Italy. In the Renaissance period splendid palaces and country-houses had been built there which, with their compact classical façades and their regular ground plans, formed the pattern for the Prince's new home. This imported style was very subtly suited to its Dutch environment. By combining brick with sandstone a picturesque effect was achieved which was entirely in keeping with Dutch tradition. The situation of the Mauritshuis on the lake is somewhat reminiscent of the old moated castles which were to be found in great numbers in Holland.



text nr. 2

2. In earlier days the Mauritshuis was more sharply separated from its surroundings; a high wall ran along the forecourt, which was replaced in the nineteenth century by iron railings. The architectural style we see in the Mauritshuis spread throughout Holland in the seventeenth century. Many buildings were erected in The Hague in this style. Just opposite the Mauritshuis there stood another majestic house of this kind, in which Constantijn Huygens lived and which was unfortunately demolished in the second half of the previous century to make way for a less attractive group of buildings.

The interiors of these houses built in the style originating in the seventeenth century are characterized by a convenient and practical grouping of rooms. The apartments and closets are regular in shape and generously provided with windows. All this was lacking in the older dwellings, which were generally angular and sombre. This new stateliness fully met the representative needs of the seventeenth century. A further typically Dutch feature is that these interiors are dominated by austere distinction.

3. A finely carved staircase leads to the top floor.

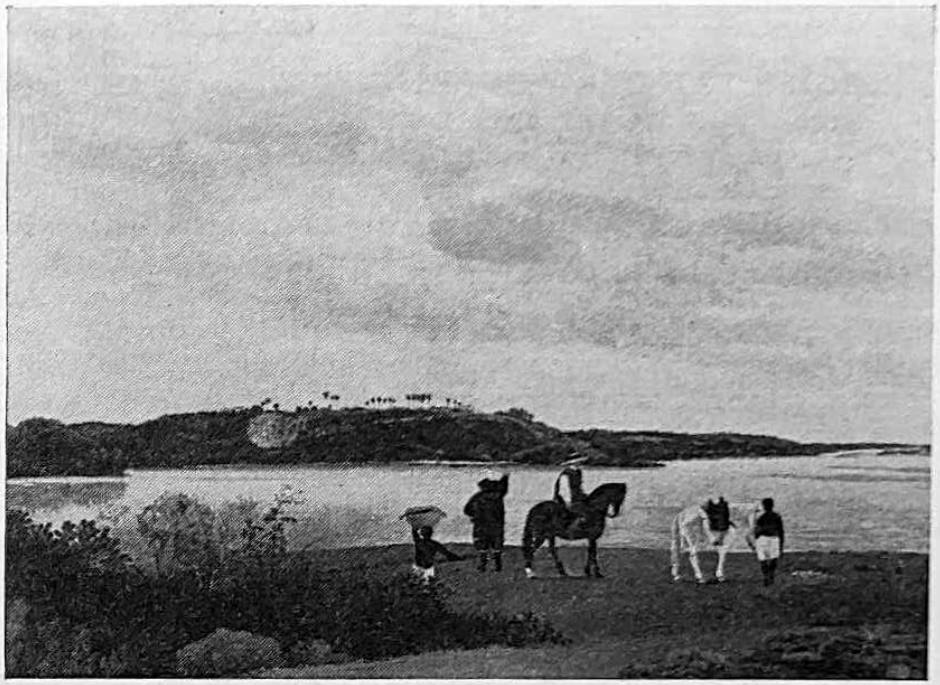
text nr 3

4. We meet Prince Maurits himself in a portrait hanging in the Mauritshuis. Very much the Grand Seigneur, as he offers himself to our gaze in a self-confident attitude, adorned with his badges of rank and orders. The grand manner is also evident from his surroundings, a view of one of the grandiose gardens such as were so often laid out by princes of those days. In this case it is the „Tiergarten" at Cleves, for in his later years Prince Johan Maurits was Governor of the Duchy of Cleves. Therefore the painting dates from about 1670 and is by Johan de Baen, a fashionable portrait painter of The Hague, who was honoured with many other commissions given by the Court.

5. The interior of the Mauritshuis has undergone many changes since

text nr. 4 hall cat. nr. 5

the days of the Prince. Not only were the majority of the rooms rebuilt in a somewhat different form after a fire in 1704, but in particular the rich collection of exotic treasures with which the Prince had adorned his home, were scattered in all directions already during his life. He had brought with him from Brazil a considerable collection of curiosities: valuable plates and dishes, feather parasols and Indian royal mantles decorated various rooms. Furthermore, exotic decorations had been carried out by painters who had accompanied the Prince on his travels. There were scenes of Indian life and that of the negro slaves, and also large panoramas of Brazilian landscapes, which were painted by Frans Post (1612—1680). Now there are no more than two landscapes by this painter on view in the Mauritshuis.



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THE COLLECTION

After the death of the Prince the Mauritshuis led a precarious existence. For some time it served to accommodate important guests of the States General, and not until after the Napoleonic wars was the Royal Picture Gallery placed therein. The collection of the Stadtholders thus forms the basis of the present gallery. As a result it is natural that many paintings recall earlier princes of the House of Orange.

6. ROGIER VAN DER WEYDEN (born at Doornik 1399; died in Brussels 1464; worked mainly in Brussels).

The Descent from the Cross, painted about 1463.

An important and typical work of a time in which the hierarchical conception of the Middle Ages is giving way to a more personal point of view. The unrealistic gilded background of earlier days has disappeared and been replaced by a landscape which fills the background. The artist tries to feel himself the emotions of the holy figures portrayed and at the same time to give some volume to his subjects. The details reveal an extremely sharp observation of nature. All these factors would have been unthinkable in works dating fifty years earlier. This vision found its origin principally in the mystic trends of the late Middle Ages, striving after sympathy and personal apprehension of the incidents of Holy Writ. As yet the ecclesiastical character has not been overgrown by realistic elements as will be the case later. For the time being stress is always laid on the religiously important main theme. Balance in the grouping of the figures and in the proportions of the pure strong colours are the formal means with which this aim is realized. In this respect the link with earlier days is still very valid particularly in the work of Rogier van der Weyden. Profane themes which are gradually making their way into sacred art, always remain in the background with him — such as the beautiful landscape, portrayed with great restraint, and also the portrait of the praying donor, whom we see depicted here. This is the Bishop of Arras, Pierre de Ranchicourt.

7. ANONYMOUS DUTCH MASTER,

Portrait of Lysbeth van Duvenvoorde, about 1420.

At this early stage portraits are still rare, for art was in the first place a servant of the church. However, even during the fourteenth century kings and princes were repeatedly painted and occasionally prominent donors were even then depicted on votive tablets. It was, however, some considerable time before the individual was considered important enough to have his person immortalized by an independent work of art. Only after the fifteenth century did this become a more general need with the nobility as well as with the bourgeoisie, whose influence was steadily increasing. A pioneer in this field was Jan van Eyck (born between 1385 and 1390, died 1441), who was also the real founder of the old Dutch school of painting. The portrait of Lysbeth van Duvenvoorde represents a somewhat earlier stage in the development of portrait painting. Not all the consequences of the new task have been realized. Here a typical courtly dressed lady is represented in decorative fashion, rather than a personal physiognomy. With playful curling lines the figure is set down on the parchment — there is hardly any question of bodily volume. Obviously this portrait was originally stuck into a costly illuminated manuscript.

8. HANS MEMLING (born at Seligenstadt near Frankfort 1433; died in Brugge 1494; worked in Brugge).

Portrait of a man.

Of some sixty years' later date than the previous painting, this example shows the results of the intermediate development of portrait painting. Sharp observation characterizes down to the smallest details the attitude the painter takes to his subject. To approach the latter as closely as possible the scale is also altered. Generally the artist restricts himself to busts, which are almost life-size. Light and shadow model the face and the sitter fills the surrounding space with his body. This space is often reproduced realistically as a landscape or an interior. Among Dutch painters of the fifteenth century Memling was the most sought-after portrait painter. Despite his realistic conception, he was always able to represent his models in a pleasing way. Mostly we see them at prayer, for frequently the portraits formed part of altars for private use. After all, portrait painting originated with pictures of pious donors of altars and votive tablets.

9. GERARD DAVID (born about 1460 at Oudewater near Utrecht, died at Brugge 1523).

Two forest landscapes, wings of an altar piece.

This late work of the chief successor to Hans Memling is an early example of independent landscape painting. It is indeed the earliest known in painting of the Netherlands. Whereas previously the landscape served exclusively as a background to pictures in which man played the chief part, now sufficient value is attached to it to allow it to serve on its own as the subject of a work of art. But originally these two wings formed the outside of an altar. Only gradually did art in the Netherlands break away from religious ideas and representations. However, in these two panels we can already see a highly developed feeling for the beauty of a modest detail of nature. The painter's conception of his subject is based more on minute details than on a general overall picture.

ROOM D

10. ANTONIS MOR (born in Utrecht probably 1519, died in Antwerp 1576).

Portrait of a goldsmith. Painted in 1564

The size in which even members of the bourgeoisie are depicted is now in many cases life-size. The conceptions of the Renaissance, with its great interest for the individual, have triumphed for good over medieval ideas. Not without pride the subject shows the attributes of his profession on which the particular importance of his person is founded. By a glance or a gesture close contact is sought with the spectator, and as much as possible the illusion of animation is sought after. Therefore the surrounding space in which the sitter is placed plays a much more important role than previously. Not only does the light have a modelling effect, but it is already beginning to get a certain atmospheric significance. Thus only a few strong accents of colour remain, whilst a very considerable part of the painting is dominated by the softened tints of the shadows. Antonis Mor worked almost exclusively as a portrait painter and enjoyed international fame as such. He worked at the courts of Brussels, London and Madrid and was raised to the nobility as Squire van Dashorst. Not until this time do we meet the painter-nobleman. Later Rubens and Van Dijck were to become the most outstanding representatives of this new group in society. The artist, who was earlier regarded more or less as a craftsman, is now freeing himself from the limitations of a certain milieu.

11. Outstanding among the numerous portraits of the Princes of Orange is that of William the Silent in later years, painted by Adriaan Key (Antwerp, about 1544 to after 1589). A striking feature is the unadorned vision, the completely unpretentious style of this portrait, which corresponds so well to the character of the great Prince of Orange precisely because of these properties.

The collection of paintings in the Mauritshuis comprises works from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, particularly by Dutch and Flemish artists, but also a few by French and German painters.

ROOM C

12. Attributed to HANS SUESS VON KULMBACH (probably born at Kulmbach about 1485, died in Nuremberg 1522).

The birth of Mary, painted about 1520.

Gradually church art also assumes a more worldly character. The charm of many biblical stories is often based on the fact that they reflect daily life. It was the painter's intention that the spectator should recognize his own well-known surroundings and enjoy the portrayal of all kinds of incidental everyday things. The various special genres are already present in the bud, as for instance still-life and landscape painting or the depicting of daily life, which will gradually develop as divergent branches of art once the all-predominent power of the church is broken.

ROOM B

13. HANS HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER (born in Augsburg 1497 or 1498, died in London 1543).

Portrait of Robert Cheseman. Painted in 1533.

Portrait painting has now freed itself entirely from the link with the conventions of the church. The subject now presents himself self-confidently to the spectator's gaze. The figure spreads itself freely within the canvas and demands greater space than was generally the case with earlier portraits. Worldly attributes of rank come to the fore — in this case a falcon, which characterizes the sitter as a nobleman, for falconry was a privilege of the nobility. In the first place painters found new work at the courts after the church ceased to give commissions in those countries which had broken with Rome. From 1526 Holbein worked at the Court of King Henry VIII of England (one of whose many wives is depicted on another painting by Holbein in the Mauritshuis). Since as early as about 1520 Holbein confined himself almost exclusively to the painting of portraits, a specialization which had earlier been unthinkable. His eye developed an unprecedented sureness in sensing the characteristics of his models, whom he generally depicts with cold objectivity. His shapes and lines are tranquil and distinguished. Despite the richness of minute detail the stress is always laid on the total impression by dividing the picture into large planes. The colours are striking, but less vivid than was the case on the majority of earlier paintings, often being coolly selected with delicate taste.

ROOM G

14. PETER PAUL RUBENS (born at Siegen 1577, died in Antwerp 1640).

Portrait of Michiel Ophovius, Bishop of 's-Hertogenbosch. Painted probably about 1620.

Contact with the spectator is becoming steadily closer. The sitter as it were addresses him, his gestures and expression animated and spontaneous. Moreover, the striving to impress the spectator is unmistakable. The volume of the figure, considerable in itself, is deliberately accentuated to achieve a monumental effect. All this lends power to the idea which the subject represents. It is not so much the individual in his importance who is brought to the fore but the power and ideas which are incorporated in him. In this way the picture tends to carry a message to a high degree. Rubens is one of the principal representatives of the Counter-Reformation. In his activities, which comprised every field of painting, portraits played by no means the most important role. Much more numerous are the monumental historical representations in which he glorifies the power of the church and also of the worldly great. However, this very majestic art is represented in no Dutch gallery.

15. PETER PAUL RUBENS and JAN BRUEGHEL THE ELDER (born in Brussels 1568, died in Antwerp 1625).

Adam and Eve in Paradise.

A work of small dimensions — however perfect as a painting — does not recompense us for the lack of large historical paintings by Rubens in Holland. Only the figures of Adam and Eve are by Rubens. The movements are fluid and supple. The colour has movement, too, through the changing light and the subtle nuances of shadows and reflections. Photography could never give an exact rendering of all this. Some of the emotion which characterizes the style of Rubens has passed into Jan Brueghel, the excellent specialist in landscapes and animals, with whom he collaborated here. Yet Brueghel's interest is far more for details than would have been the case with Rubens.

Brueghel is in the first place interested in exhibiting details of natural history in a pleasing manner. Rubens' vision was, however, far more directed towards combining the separate parts into a grandiose whole. The total impression is the main thing with him all the time. This view was of importance for the development of art.

16. ANTHONIE VAN DIJCK (born in Antwerp 1599, died in London 1641).

Portrait of the artist Quinten Simons, painted about 1630.

Van Dijck is the most important of the many pupils of Rubens. But his personality did not possess the great creative power of his master. Therefore Van Dijck was less successful in larger compositions with historical subjects than in his portraits. As a portrait painter he is of

very great importance. It can be seen from the portrait depicted here, in which considerable stress is laid on the mood of his model; that his tendency to go into the individuality of his sitters is deeper than was the case in general with Rubens, precisely because he was less preoccupied with guiding principles. The connection with Rubens is always obvious in the external design of his portraits. But in the long run the impressive makes way for elegance, particularly in the graceful portraits which Van Dijck painted in his later period for the English Court. He then laid the foundations of the conventional international type of portrait, with continued in essence at the courts for more than two hundred years.

ROOM B

17. DAVID TENIERS (born in Antwerp 1610, died in Brussels 1690).

Kitchen interior, 1644.

This is definitely no ordinary kitchen we see here; that is obvious from the number of utensils and the stately row of geese and chickens roasting on the spit. In the foreground the coat of arms of the Hapsburgs can be seen on a magnificent pie, which is partly covered by the plumage of a swan. It is therefore the kitchen of the Court in Brussels when the Archduke Leopold Wilhelm was Stadtholder there. Teniers was court-painter to this art-loving prince. Festive gaiety issues forth from most of his pictures, a frequent characteristic of seventeenth century Flemish art. When choosing his subjects he preferred scenes from daily life. This special type of painting, which confines itself to reproducing conditions and incidents of the painter's environment, is known as genre painting. From the sixteenth century many Dutch artists occupied themselves with this branch of painting. However, the summit was only reached in the seventeenth century, and less in Flanders than in Holland, where one was in general more sensitive for the charm of simple things.

In the seventeenth century in Holland there were no longer any great givers of commissions, such as the church and the courts had been. Therefore art developed much more in accordance with private life. As a result most paintings were modest in size, the subjects preferably being intime. This definitely promoted the development of the realistic tendencies which had long been present in Dutch art. Even the few large tasks which were set a Dutch painter contributed to furthering realism. These were the representative portraits, in which socially prominent groups, such as leading members of guilds, trustees of charitable institutions and, above all, the civic guards, had themselves immortalized for posterity.

LANDING

18. Especially worthy of attention is a painting dating from the first quarter of the seventeenth century showing the family of the Stadtholder riding along the „Hofvijver". We see Prince Maurits and Prince Frederik Hendrik, and between them William the Silent. Although the latter had been long dead when the painting was made, he was included to increase the significance of the idea behind the painting. One can also see the cousins of the Princes, Count Willem Lodewijk van Nassau and Frederik the Elector Palatinate, who won great fame under the name of the Winter King, owing to his short stay on the throne of Bohemia. The whole picturesque procession is moving from the „Binnenhof" towards the „Lange Vijverberg". The topographical situation has hardly changed today, after more than three centuries. Many aspects shown in the painting may still be found now near the Mauritshuis. The picture was painted by Hendrik Pacx, who worked from about 1620 until about 1660.

ROOM I

19. REMBRANDT HARMENSZ. VAN RIJN (born in Leyden 1606, died in Amsterdam 1669).

The anatomy lesson, 1632.

The first big commission which Rembrandt received was this group. It dates from the year 1632 and represents the members of the Amsterdam Guild of Surgeons, under the chairmanship of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp. It was not enough for Rembrandt to place the figures, as closely depicted as possible, in a neat little row, as had occurred more than once in similar representations in Amsterdam. It is not for nothing that this painting is generally known as „the anatomy lesson" and not just the portrait of the Amsterdam Guild of Surgeons. Rembrandt had considerably more imagination than any artist of his day. Hence he continuously aspired beyond the limits of the tasks he was set. Of course, there were other painters, as for instance Frans Hals, who always made it their duty to bring life and an intrinsic connection in their large groups. But with Rembrandt it was more than a question of motivating his subjects in an animated and at the same time logical manner by an anatomical demonstration. The monumental construction of the group, the mysterious power of the light which extends over this group, contribute to giving a much more comprehensive tendency to the picture. The spirit and the serious nature of scientific research appear in no other work of art in so imposing a way.

20. REMBRANDT.

Simon in the temple. Painted in 1631, a year before the anatomy-lesson.

To a much greater degree than in the previous painting the general atmosphere is here dominated by the effect of the light. The figures are small beneath the high vault of the temple, which is immersed in a mystic half-light. A ray of light falls from above on to the figures, and it is this which lends them their significance. It is not so much that the individual figures stand out as a result; much rather is it the connection between the figures and their gestures in which the inner emotion expresses itself. Hence the visionary might of the gesture of the prophetess Hannah, hence the intensity with which the essence of the occasion is displayed. Now it seems strange that the dimensions of this painting in no way correspond to the magnitude of the conception. It is only a small panel. From this contradiction we can understand how greatly Rembrandt must have felt himself drawn to the greater commissions which fell to his lot soon afterwards in Amsterdam. The anatomy-lesson was the cause of his leaving his native town of Leyden. As long as he stayed there, his method of painting continued to be of an almost miniature delicacy. Only in Amsterdam, the city which could offer him the greatest possibility of developing his talents, was he to free himself therefrom.

21. REMBRANDT.

Self-portrait, shortly before 1630.

This transition can be seen from two self-portraits, one of which was painted shortly before 1630 in Leyden, the other a few years later in Amsterdam. The early self-portrait is again a portrait of very modest dimensions. The design is modest, too, the expression austere. All details are shown in minute fashion, but these in no way determine the impression of the whole.

22. REMBRANDT.

Self-portrait, about 1635.

Rembrandt appears much more self-assured on the second painting. There is pride in his bearing and his features reflect dramatic tension. The portrayal is bold and has width. It is characteristic of Rembrandt's intention that he did not feel it enough to depict himself in the clothing of his own time. A fantastic cap with a feather, of the kind worn not in the seventeenth but in the sixteenth century, must evoke thoughts of a knightly character. Already at this stage the romantic need to escape the trivialities of every-day life in the present makes itself felt.

Rembrandt wishes to depict more elementary aspects of humanity, which cannot be expressed within bourgeois limitations.

23. PAULUS POTTER (born at Enkhuizen 1625, died in Amsterdam 1654).

The cow reflected in the water, painted 1648.

From about the middle of the seventeenth century onwards we once again encounter landscapes in which men and animals play a greater part. Paulus Potter, who died young but was tremendously productive, developed into a genius, specializing in the painting of animals. His small paintings are jewels of the painter's craft and are characterized by unbiased and devoted observation.

24. JACOB VAN RUYSDAEL (born in Haarlem 1629, probably died in Amsterdam 1682).

Winter scene, about 1665.

After the middle of the seventeenth century the individual parts of a landscape begin to come to the fore again. Much more strongly than previously painters indulged in a certain theme, which was worked up into an artistic composition. The colours, too, play a greater part than before. The feeling for the effects of light and atmosphere, the indulgence in very varied moods of nature, have remained. Jacob van Ruysdael is the greatest landscape painter of this later period.

25. ADRIAEN VAN OSTADE (born in Haarlem 1610, died there 1685).

The violinist. A late work, painted in 1673.

Originally Van Ostade loved interiors full of atmosphere, in which small insignificant figures moved in an abundance of light. But gradually the lives of these people, who always belong to the simplest ranks of the people, became the main theme of his paintings. The figures became somewhat larger and more colourful. Ostade has a cheerful outlook on their good-natured goings, and we feel that he is from the cheerful surroundings of Frans Hals.

ROOM J

26. REMBRANDT.

Self-portrait, 1669.

The way Rembrandt followed as a man is illuminated by a long series of self-portraits, the last of which was painted in the year of his death.

A whole life can be read from his tired features. His gaze speaks of introspection and resignation. This figure seems to be tarrying in timeless distance, which is also brought to expression by the strange dress. The technique has become broad and concise.

27. REMBRANDT.

Saul and David, about 1658.

One of the most important pictures of Rembrandt's later years. His whole life long Rembrandt was particularly attracted to biblical subjects. Here were the greatest possibilities for him to interpret events of universal human significance in his own language. Without being bound to fixed conventions by any commission, he could express his own personality to the full in these pictures. His capacity for feeling and understanding grew steadily greater. Thus, in this painting he places two men alongside each other who are nevertheless separated from each other by the totally different thoughts in which each of them is sunk. This separation is depicted in an almost brutal fashion by the curtain of the baldachin which runs diagonally down the painting. The Old Testament king is made to seize the curtain to wipe away his tears, an unguarded moment in which human feelings get the upper hand of royal dignity. The splendid robes of the king, which reflect a falling ray of light, form a gripping contrast herewith. This portrayal is unbelievably daring; it corresponded, therefore, little to what Rembrandt's contemporaries were accustomed to, and many years went by before such works were understood. Rembrandt was ahead of his time in his method of painting, too. He thought only of large forms. These were delineated with broad, sure brush strokes, in the knowledge that more can be said by an indication than by the thorough working out of the details.

28. REMBRANDT.

The two negroes, 1661.

With a minimum of means the ultimate of suggestion is achieved. The execution remains sketchy, the colour is restricted to the most delicate nuances of grey. One white patch is sufficient to call into being a considerable effect of light and space and at the same time to build up the loosely linked group into a whole from the point of view of composition. The contrast in expression, which stresses the portrayal of the two models, fills the work with intense internal tension.

29. REMBRANDT.

Homer, 1663.

He painted this Homer in 1663. The ideas which form the basis of all his later work are expressed here in full force. Just as his subjects are illuminated by a light which comes from somewhere far off, so do their thoughts come from afar and return thither. Their gaze is introspective. The individual human being appears as it were absorbed in a great transcendental whole. These thoughts, which he has realized in both his historical studies and his portraits, make Rembrandt stand alone among the artists of his day.

ROOM K

30. BARTHOLOMEUS VAN DER HELST (born in Haarlem 1613, died in Amsterdam 1670).

Portrait of the painter Paulus Potter. Painted in 1654, the year of the latter's death.

The style of portrait painting towards the middle of the century is typically represented by the work of Van der Helst. He was then the most popular portrait painter in Amsterdam. His models pose in freer attitudes, which occurred much less in works of earlier years. The clothing of his subjects is also less dignified than in earlier days. In his characterizations the dominating note is somewhat sober objectivity, but more and more the requirement makes itself felt to depict the subjects as they themselves try to appear in real life when in company, with affable bearing. His technique is careful and polished, as much in the subordinate parts as in the faces. The drawing is pure and the colours, which, particularly in portraits of women, are once again beginning to play a greater part than before, are preferably cold. However, the space surrounding the figures is always veiled in soft tonality, to achieve the effect of atmosphere. The portrait of Paulus Potter, which is one of the best works of Van der Helst, reveals a more personal vision than is otherwise the case with him.

31. JAN DE BRAY (born in Haarlem about 1627, died there 1697).

The Orphan, 1654.

The same year the Amsterdam-painter Van der Helst made the portrait of Potter, Jan de Bray finished this portrait of a boy. In the town of Frans Hals Jan de Bray filled many orders, which agreed with the taste of the average-bourgeois. Although De Bray on the whole has adopted something of the lively touch of his great townsman, he misses the

masterly stroke of the brush and the sharp observation of human types.

In this little portrait of a boy however he has reached a culminating point. The little boy, painted to the middle, masterly placed in the plan, is very moving because of the tenderness the painter has brought to his object.

32. GERARD DOU (born in Leyden 1613, died there 1675).

The young mother. Painted 1658.

The most flourishing period of Dutch genre painting, about the middle of the seventeenth century is characterized by great versatility. There were many excellent artists, each of whom understood how to express himself and his entire, sometimes rather limited, personality in this special branch of painting.

Gerard Dou lived in Leyden and was a pupil of the young Rembrandt. Whereas Rembrandt was a „delicate" painter when he was still working in Leyden, Dou remained one his whole life. Just as the young Rembrandt, he loves the half-light of dark rooms, in which the figures do not fulfil a pre-eminently dominant function. With him interiors have become a setting for scenes of every-day life, which he reproduces with just as much devotion as the inanimate objects which form part of this life.

33. JAN STEEN (born in Leyden 1626, died there 1679).

The poultry yard. Painted in 1660.

The most versatile personality among the Dutch genre painters is Jan Steen. His imagination in the thinking up and the observation of perpetually new situations is almost inexhaustible, his merry vitality peerless. He can stir many chords and when it suits his purpose he is open to impressions from other painters of his day. Jan Steen worked in Leyden and Utrecht, in The Hague and Delft, and also in Haarlem and everywhere he borrows something from the colleagues he meets; as a result his work only becomes richer and his own good humour prevails throughout.

Once Jan Steen was commissioned to paint the portrait of the little Baroness of Wassenaar, but he could not rest until he had included everything which might please a small girl. It has become an entire menagerie, a charming picture, and much more than the ordinary portrait of a child.

34. CAREL FABRITIUS (born at Midden-Beemster 1622, killed in Delft in the explosion of the powder magazine 1654).

The linnet, painted in 1654.

Only a few works of this painter have been preserved. He was a pupil of Rembrandt, whose influence he sublimated very independently, whilst in contradistinction to him he made use of light backgrounds. Heads, small figures or even such modest themes as the linnet on its cage come to the fore as a result in a striking silhouette effect. This method of painting, which lends particular intensity to his subjects, was taken over in many cases by Vermeer, the last and the greatest seventeenth century painter of simple every-day things.

35. PAULUS POTTER.

The young bull, dated 1647.

Potter also tried his hand at quite large-sized paintings, such as here in his best-known work. At that time the roomy homes of the upper classes required large wall decorations. However, the modest content of Potter's art is a strange contrast to these monumental dimensions. Potter found the theme for this painting nearby his home in The Hague. In the background Rijswijk Church and the manorhouse De Binckhorst can be seen.

36. WILLEM VAN DE VELDE THE YOUNGER (born in Leyden 1633, died at Greenwich 1707).

View of the Y. Shortly after 1660.

Willem van de Velde is the best-known Dutch painter of marines in the seventeenth century. His style reveals the same characteristics as are also to be observed in landscape art of the later period; his colours are fresh and yet veiled in a moist atmosphere. There is an express feeling for space and width, but in the main his interest is directed towards ships, which he reproduces with wonderful accuracy.

ROOM L

37. JAN VAN DER HEYDE (born at Gorkum 1673, died in Amsterdam 1712).

View of the Oude-Zijds-Voorburgwal and the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam. About 1680.

A broad vision of objects declines more and more towards the end of the seventeenth century. The painters pay particular attention to all possible details, and the pleasing and the cosy dominate their works.

Sometimes very attractive paintings were made in this style, as for instance the town views of Jan van der Heyde, reproduced in such minute detail.

38. FRANS VAN MIERIS (born in Leyden 1635, died there 1681).

Oyster dish, 1661.

With the later generation of seventeenth century genre painters more and more stress is laid on a gleaming and sparkling effect. Considerable luxury is displayed, and the virtuosity with which costly materials and objects are reproduced demands a good deal of one's attention. The somewhat affected nature which the figures have adopted admirably suits the precious character of these works of art, generally small, of the last phase of seventeenth century genre painting.

ROOM M

39. CORNELIS TROOST (born in Amsterdam 1697, died there 1750).

Twelfth night, about 1640.

The eighteenth century had little to add to the inheritance of the Golden Age. No new ground was won, since painters were caught in the traditional way of thinking. In general a comfortable atmosphere predominates, which is interpreted in a cheerful good-natured way by Cornelis Troost, then the best Dutch painter. He mainly drew his subjects from domestic life or — a characteristic of his day — from satirical comedies which he had seen performed in the theatre. He mainly painted in pastels, a technique which was then fashionable and which is the most transient of all painting techniques.

ROOM H

40. GERARD TERBORCH (born in Zwolle 1617, died in Deventer 1681).

Portrait of the Painter. About 1670.

Terborch presented here a full-length-selfportrait on a small scale. With plain colours of some greys and blacks, against which only the carnation and the lace collar contrast, the painter contrives to reach, just by this, an effect of great refinement.

Terborch has painted himself as a Grand Seigneur, anyway as representative of the citizens, who have slowly grown portly and who more and more imitate the Louis XIV style in demeanour and dress.

41. PIETER CODDE (born in Amsterdam 1599 or 1600, died there 1678).

A dancing party, 1636.

The illustration of scenes from every-day life, which the painters could see around them — genre painting thus — spread throughout Holland during the seventeenth century in an unprecedented way. In the development of this many a phenomenon can be seen which may also be found in portrait painting, but with this the culmination was not reached by the older generation of painters, as was the case with the portrait, but by those who from about 1650 onwards predominated. This painting by Pieter Codde is from the first half of the century. It is dated 1636. There prevails exuberant gaiety. However, the artist is not so much interested in the individual figures but in the feelings of the whole group. Nor does any single colour predominate. A soft brown tone is maintained throughout. As a result the most important aspect for the eye is the impression of the whole canvas, which is filled by teeming life.

42. GERARD TERBORCH.

Lady writing a letter. Painted about 1655.

Terborch prefers to choose his subjects from the life of the fashionable circles, and is particularly at home in the atmosphere of charming young ladies. His canvases are restful and distinguished, and he leaves more to the imagination than he actually says. The discreet austere character of his art has in correspondence thereto sensitive delineation and a very subtle range of colours.

43. GABRIEL METSU (born in Leyden 1629, died in Amsterdam 1667).

A company making music. Painted between 1660 and 1665.

In this picture Metsu associates himself with the refined salon art of Terborch. But he, more than the latter, lays stress on external luxury. However, for all the elegance which he sometimes displays, his works are full of frankness. In the virtuosity of his technique we feel a later phase of seventeenth century painting approaching.

44. JOHANNES VERMEER VAN DELFT (born in Delft 1632, died there 1675).

The girl with the pearl, about 1660.

The essence of Vermeer's art is crystal-clear. No other painter of those days gave an account so purely of his visual impressions as Vermeer. He therefore above all painted his closest surroundings, the people

who served him as models, the rooms of his own house, the façade on the other side of the street. He has a quite unprejudiced interest for his subject, and whilst he tries to reproduce on his canvas the impressions of what he has immediately before his eyes, unexpected properties therein reveal themselves to him. Vermeer understood how abundant shadow and light can alter a shape and a colour; he understood that the shadows not only cause the colours to merge into grey and black, but that the shadows can themselves create new colours. He saw how relative the proportions are in which the appearance of things reveals itself again and again in different form. It is because of all this that Vermeer's work seems so close to our own time. With the discoveries of his eye, therefore, he was far ahead of this time. Not until the previous century was it realized that he was one of Holland's greatest painters.

The girl with the pearl shows Vermeer's pure interest for the model. With a sure feeling for the beauty of proportions and colours he chooses such simple subjects and in his reproduction thereof they are condensed to such an intensity that we feel we are seeing them in a new way through his eyes.

45. JACOB VAN RUYSDAEL.

View of Haarlem, about 1670.

The town is seen from a distance, from somewhere in the dunes to the north-west. It must be a late summer afternoon, for the colours are clear and soft. The theme, always recurring in Dutch landscape painting, of a wide flatness, a high cloudy sky and the play of light receive here a particularly individual interpretation.

46. JAN VAN GOYEN (born in Leyden 1596, died in The Hague 1656).

River scene, dated 1655.

The development of the seascape and river scenes naturally followed a parallel course to that of landscape painting.

The work of Jan van Goyen shows an extreme in atmosphere painting. He became a pioneer of this about 1630 and always continued as an exponent thereof. He particularly loved rainy moods and heavily clouded skies, of a damp atmosphere which causes all colours to become blurred. In his paintings man and his works always appear small and unimportant in comparison with nature.

ROOM N

47. JAN STEEN.

Merry company. About 1665.

Frequently Jan Steen also depicts his own family in joyous and festive mood. In these cases he likes to include himself among the persons he depicts, as here where he is giving one of his sons a pipe to smoke. Such paintings are often very great in design and of rich and stirring composition. If necessary, Jan Steen could also paint with a broad and vivid touch. In such works he shows that he owes much to Frans Hals. It is a radiant finale, in which much of the art of his predecessors and rivals is summarized.

48. JAN STEEN.

A girl with oysters. About 1660.

From the eyes of the girl who is salting oysters to offer them for sale to willing buyers there shines racy archness. Such a painting has a much more powerful effect than the work of the Leyden „delicate" painters to whose influence it certainly bears witness.

49. HENDRIK AVERCAMP, (called De Stomme van Kampen, born in Amsterdam 1585, died at Kampen 1634).

Scene on the ice, between 1610 and 1615.

Even at the beginning of the seventeenth century landscape painting was practised by many Dutch painters. What attracted these painters was, in the beginning, not so much the character of a certain landscape — or the various moods of the time of day or season of the year — but more generally a mountain scene, a view of a wood or occasionally a winter's day. Thereby the doings of the numerous colourful figures which were spread over such a landscape attracted at least as much interest as the landscape itself. With Avercamp, who was particularly charmed by views of ice, grey already predominates the other colours.

50. AERT VAN DER NEER (born in Amsterdam 1603, died there 1677).

Ice scene, dated 1655.

From about 1630 onwards a great change occurred in landscape painting. Now it is the wideness of space, the effect of light and atmosphere by which the painters are entranced in the first place. The things per se occurring in a landscape are not so very much important. The horizon becomes low, the sky ever wider. The air softens the colour and

in the perspective they then dissolve entirely into vague tints. In this way great distances are suggested. Hence, too, the preference for a soft grey or brown-grey tonality. Van Goyen and Salomon van Ruysdael are the principal landscape painters who follow this trend. Aert van der Neer came only later.

The development in landscape art best explains the preference which is now given to softened tints instead of strong colours — a preference which may also be observed in all other fields of painting, particularly in still-life.

In this room you will also find the painting by Frans Post (see nr. 5 of this guidebook).

ROOM O

51. FRANS HALS (born in Antwerp probably 1580, died in Haarlem 1666.)

Portrait of Jacob Pietersz. Olycan, 1625.

The numerous seventeenth century painters who worked exclusively as portrait painters, saw their commissions quite differently to Rembrandt. Frans Hals has a predominant place among these. He is only occupied with what he personally sees in his models. Sharply observant, he draws conclusions which always hit the mark and he is not afraid to reproduce them with the utmost clarity. His view of mankind is by no means idealistic. In the first place their weaknesses never escape him and he knows how to reveal them strikingly, mostly with a merry smile. Whatever fashionable clothes his model may wear, for Frans Hals the clothes do not make the man and this always emerges in plain terms. He approaches his subjects quite unprejudiced and as a result his paintings are characterized by an extremely fascinating diversity in their delineation. Sometimes, indeed, he went a bit too far for his subjects in order to be satisfied with his work. Thus as the years went by he fell somewhat from public favour. For then people in certain circles had become so elegant that they could not stand very much criticism. The portrait of Jacob Olycan and that of his wife are of the relatively early period. Both were painted in 1625.

52. FRANS HALS.

Portrait of Aletta Hanemans, wife of Jacob Olycan, 1625.

The portraits of the first three decades of the seventeenth century are in general characterized by stateliness of bearing and design. The heavy stiff dress corresponds well to this, too. No-one painted these costly

costumes with the skill and freshness of Frans Hals. Each part reveals the pleasure he felt in these things. However, he never goes into details. There is but little colour and it is dominated by a delicate, mostly grey tonality.

53. JOHANNES VERMEER VAN DELFT.

View of Delft, about 1658.

Here Vermeer's technique has reached complete realization. There is a powerful effect of silhouettes and strong colour and at the same time the transparent tints of light and atmosphere. A wide sky with slowly moving clouds extends a canopy over the little town, still medieval where a succession of sunbeams and shadows plays. The human figures are placed in the far distance so as not to interrupt the silent contemplation.

This picture would never have been painted had it not been preceded by a lengthy development of landscape painting in Holland.

54. JAN STEEN.

The doctor's visit. Painted shortly before 1670.

Jan Steen was also charmed by interiors of fashionable people, but he likes to fill them with somewhat laughable people: a lovesick young lady and an amiable fathead of a doctor, who will rarely find the true cause of his patient's malady. Jan Steen, born in the university town of Leyden, likes to tilt at the learned gentleman.

55. JOHANNES VERMEER VAN DELFT.

Diana, about 1653.

At the beginning of Vermeer's activity there were a few paintings with subjects which are unusual for him. The representation of Diana resting from the hunt reveals, however, that from the beginning his attention was directed towards simplicity. Diana and her companions give the impression of ordinary Dutch girls and in general such a painting reproduces more the painter's environment, rather than evoking the atmosphere of Greek mythology. Vermeer seems to have realized that his strength did not lie within this field and that he must follow a different path. At this stage his colours already have quite an individual character and the still-life in the foreground indicates Vermeer's future development.

56. GERARD TERBORCH.

The unwelcome news. Painted in 1653.

This is a scene from military life. An officer is being called away from his love-making. The individual figures stand out here with extreme clarity. With delicate irony the stress is laid on the situation. As a result the scene is limited to a few figures and this greater concentration expresses itself even in the choice of a smaller canvas, to which preference is now generally given. The colours are also more outstanding than before, and this also helps to lay stress on the figures. However, by soft modulations the colours are absorbed in a twilight atmosphere which fills the whole picture.

S. J. GUDLAUGSSON

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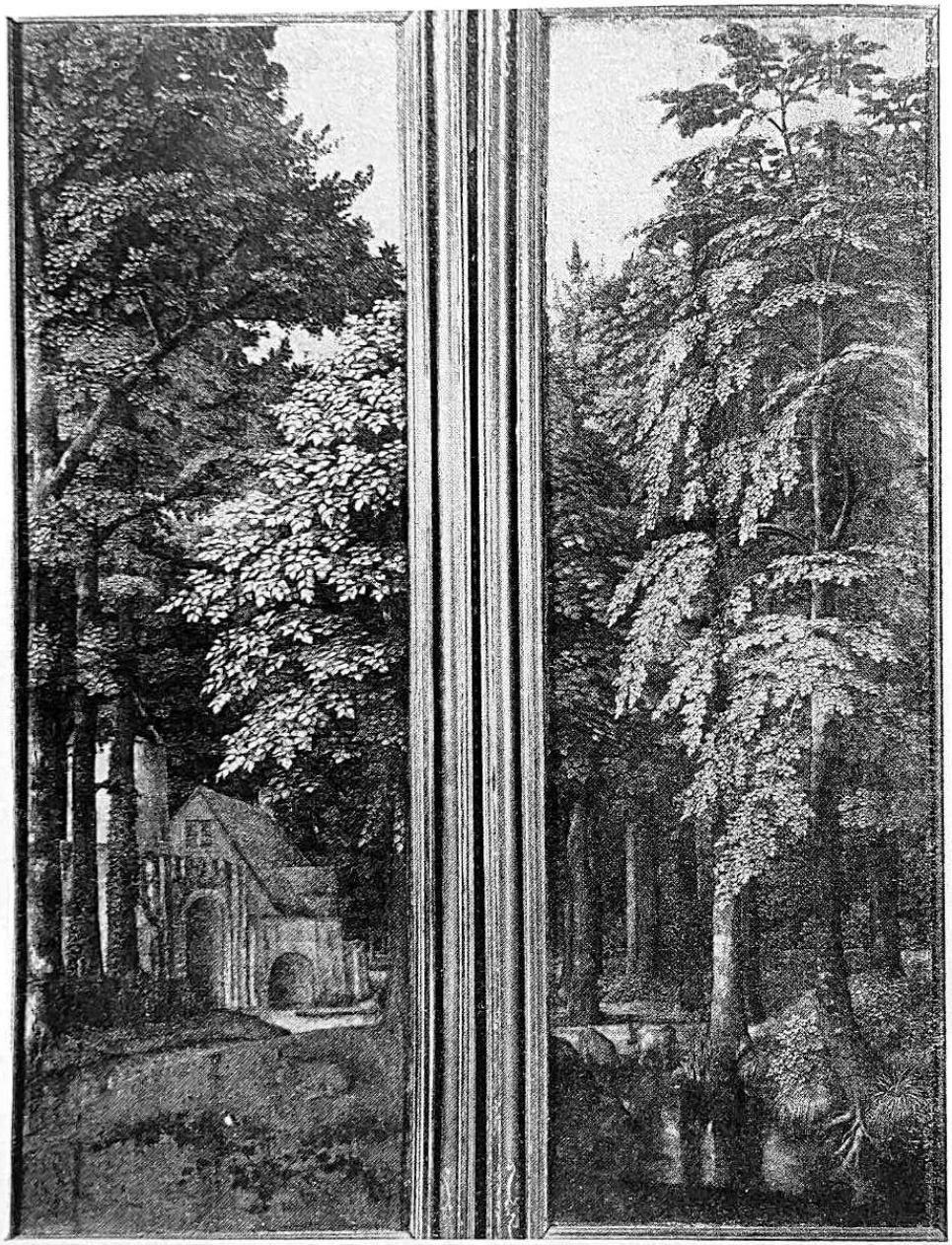

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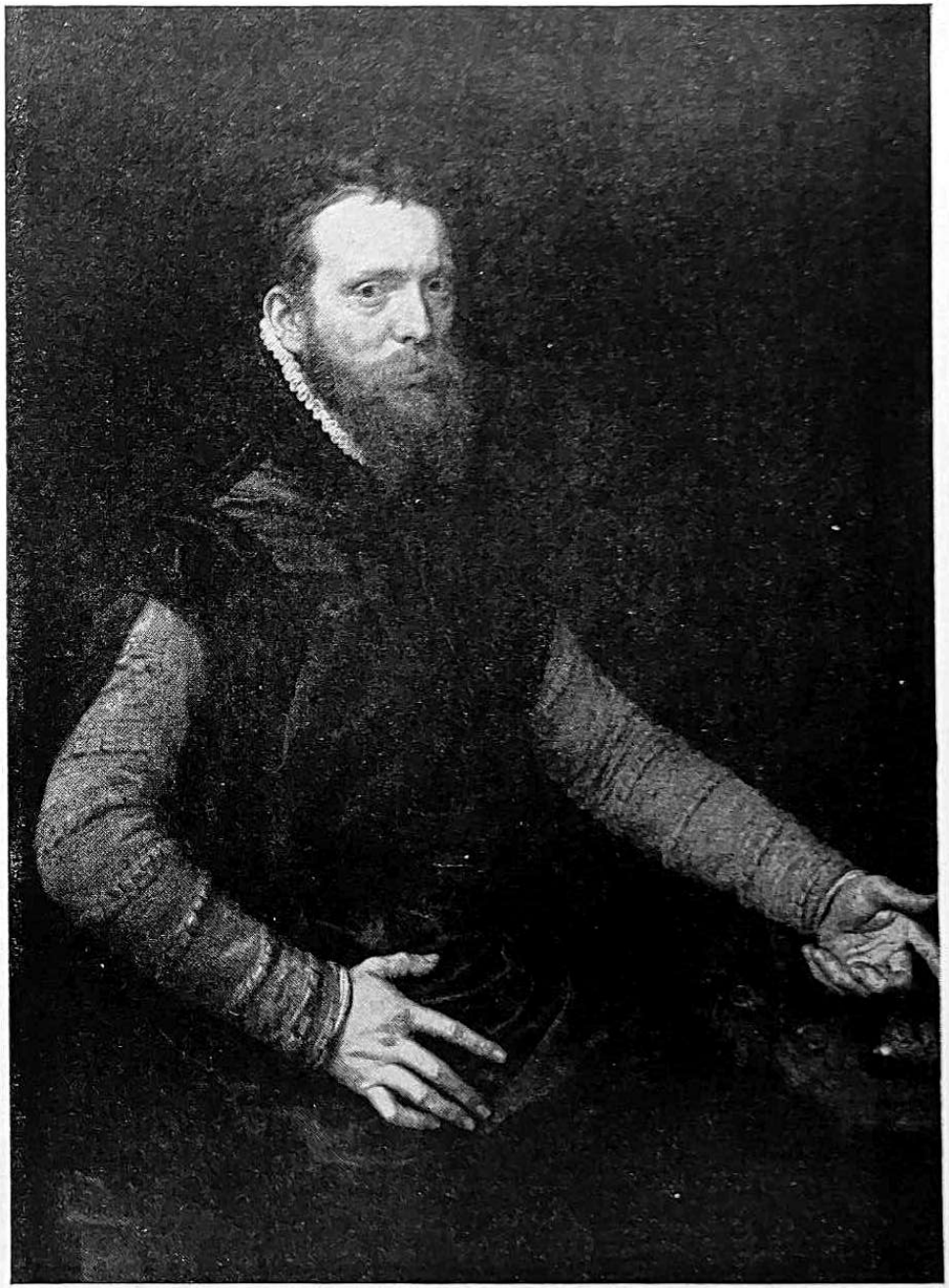

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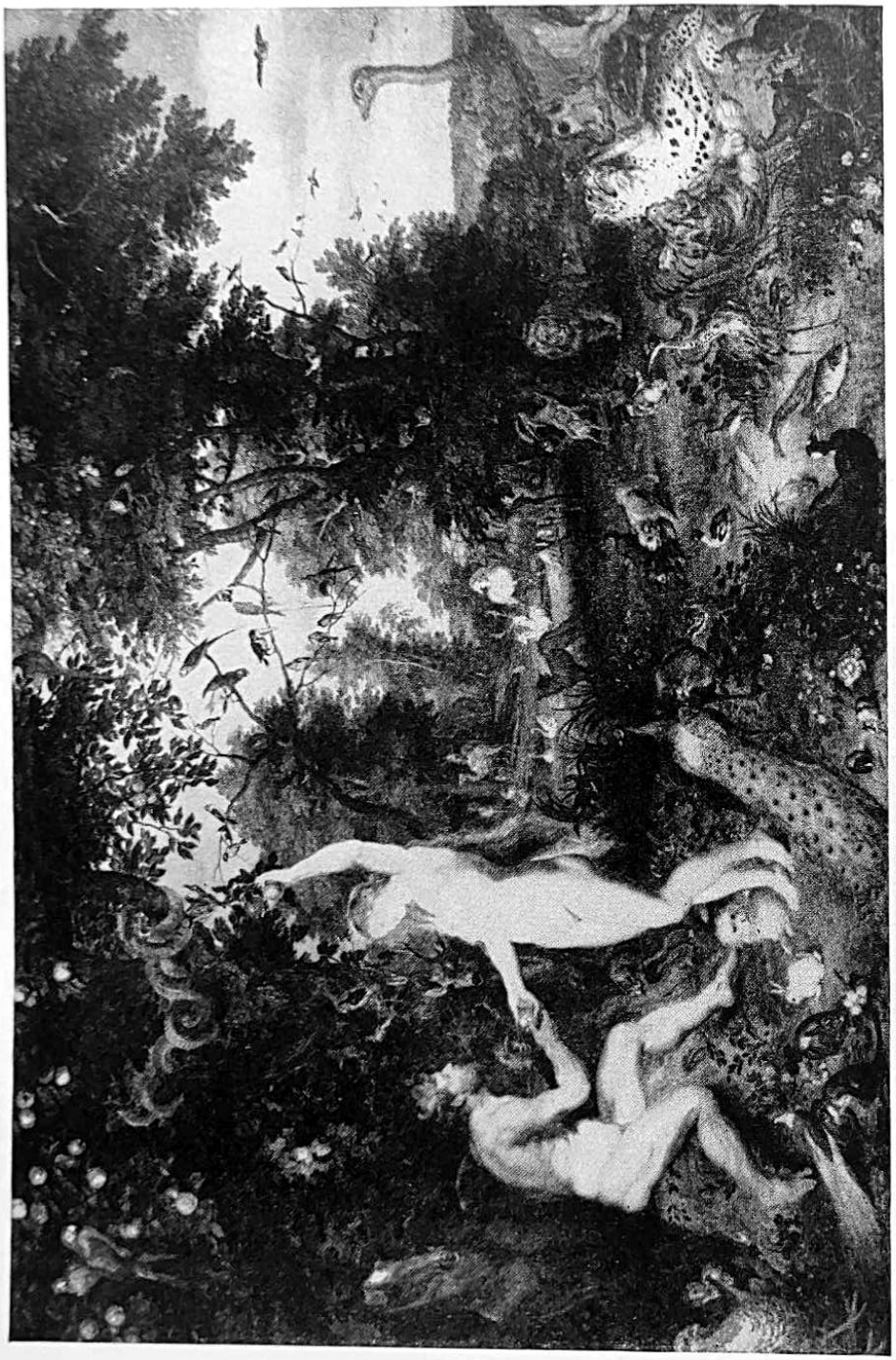

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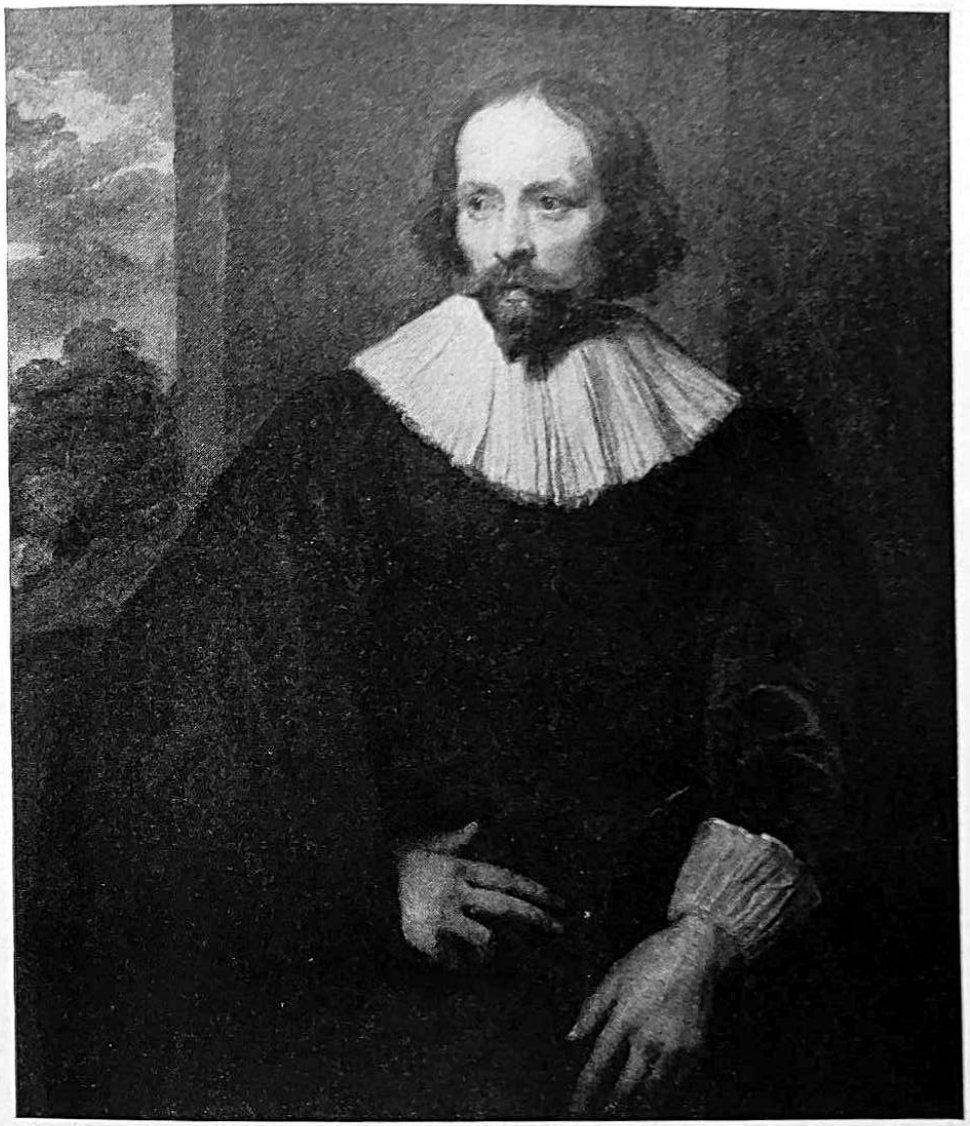

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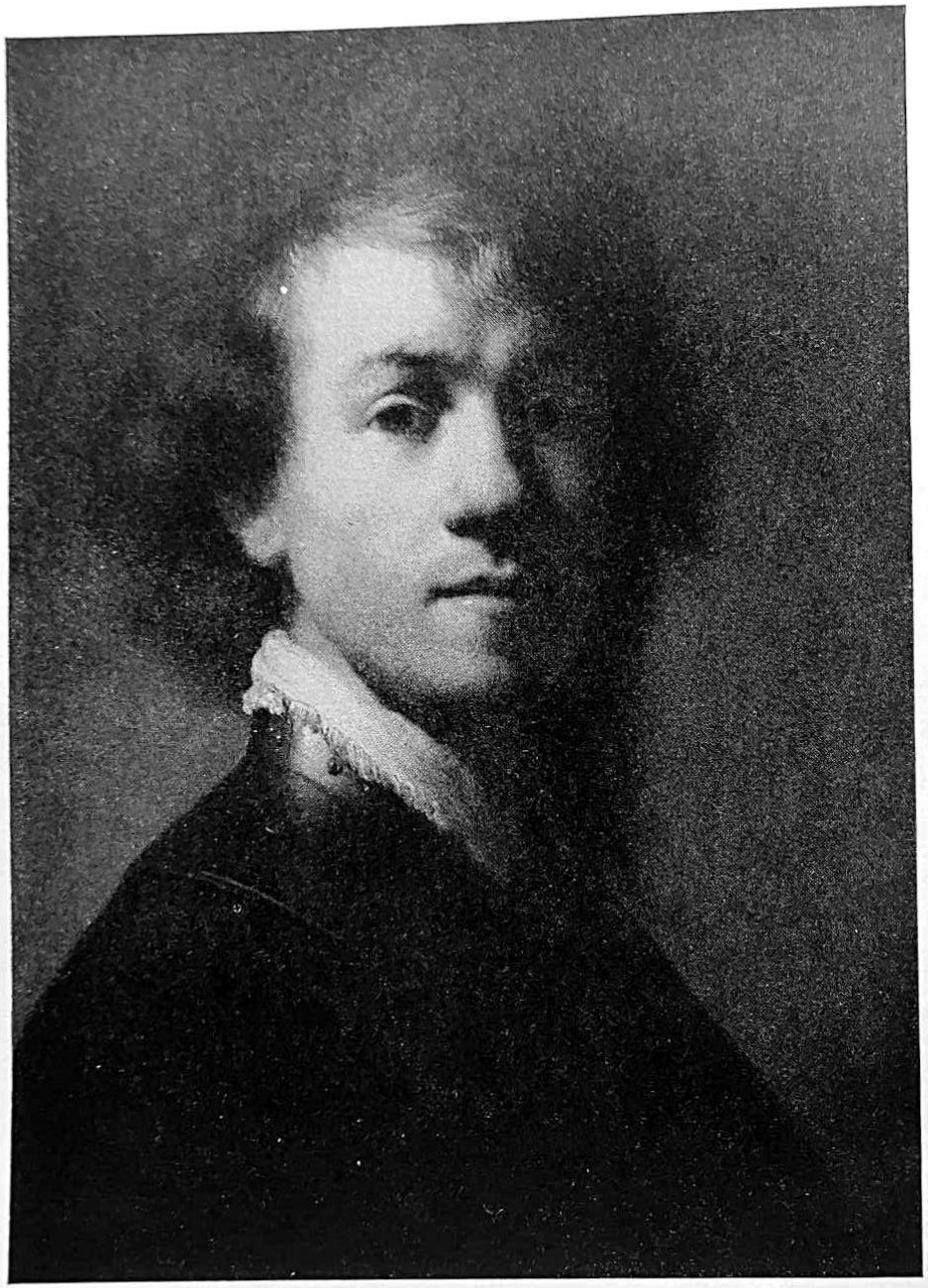

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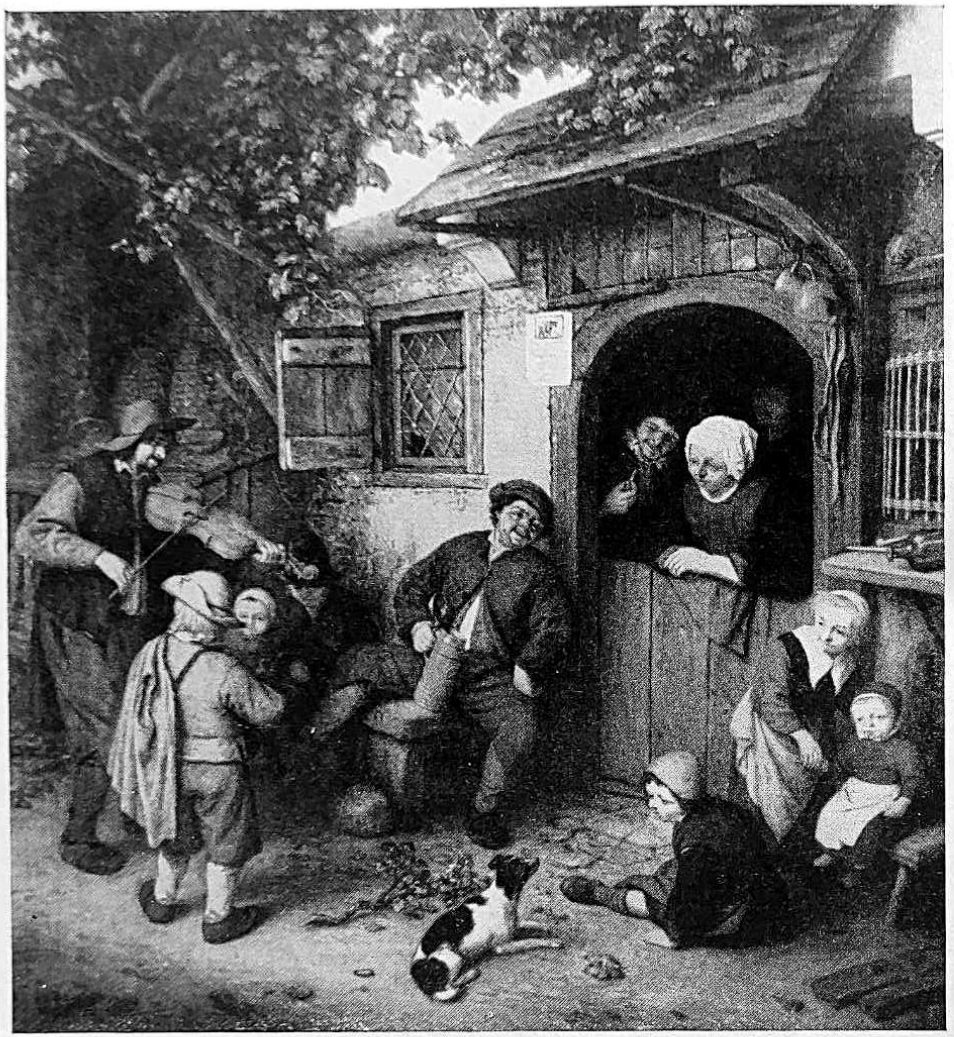

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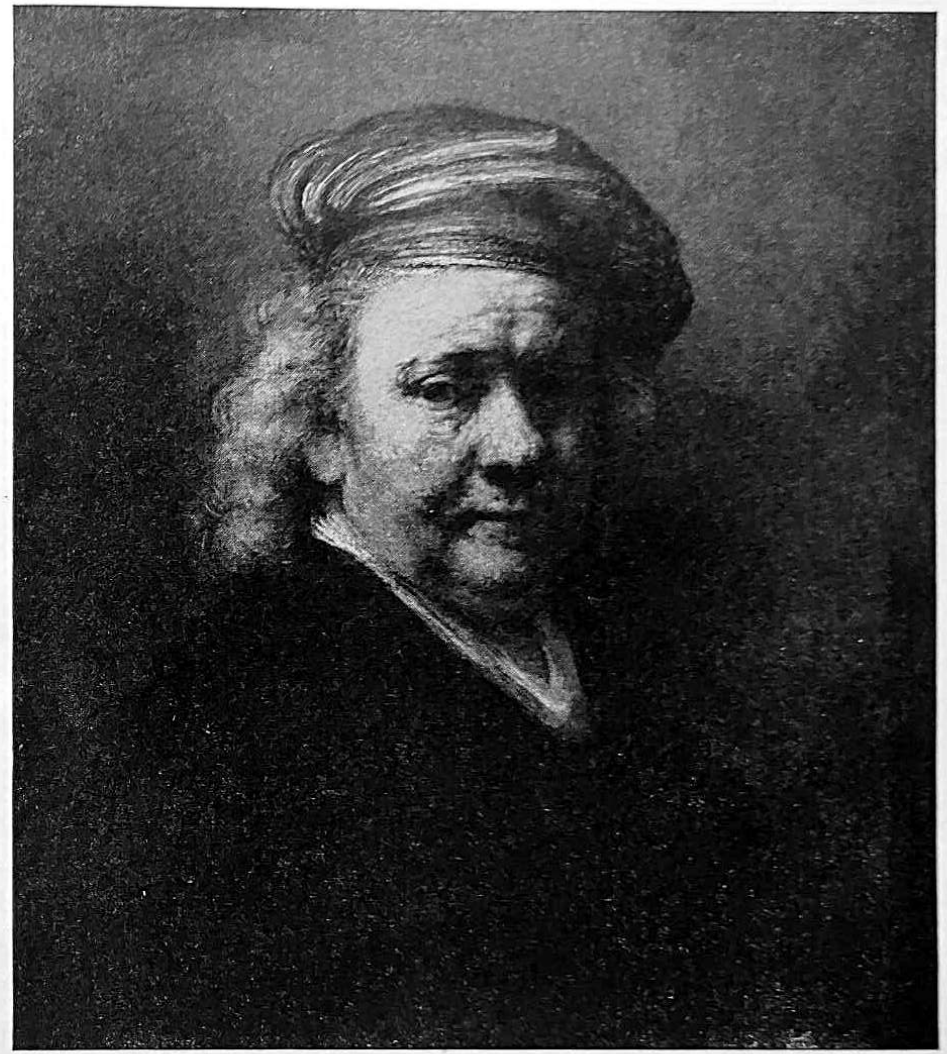

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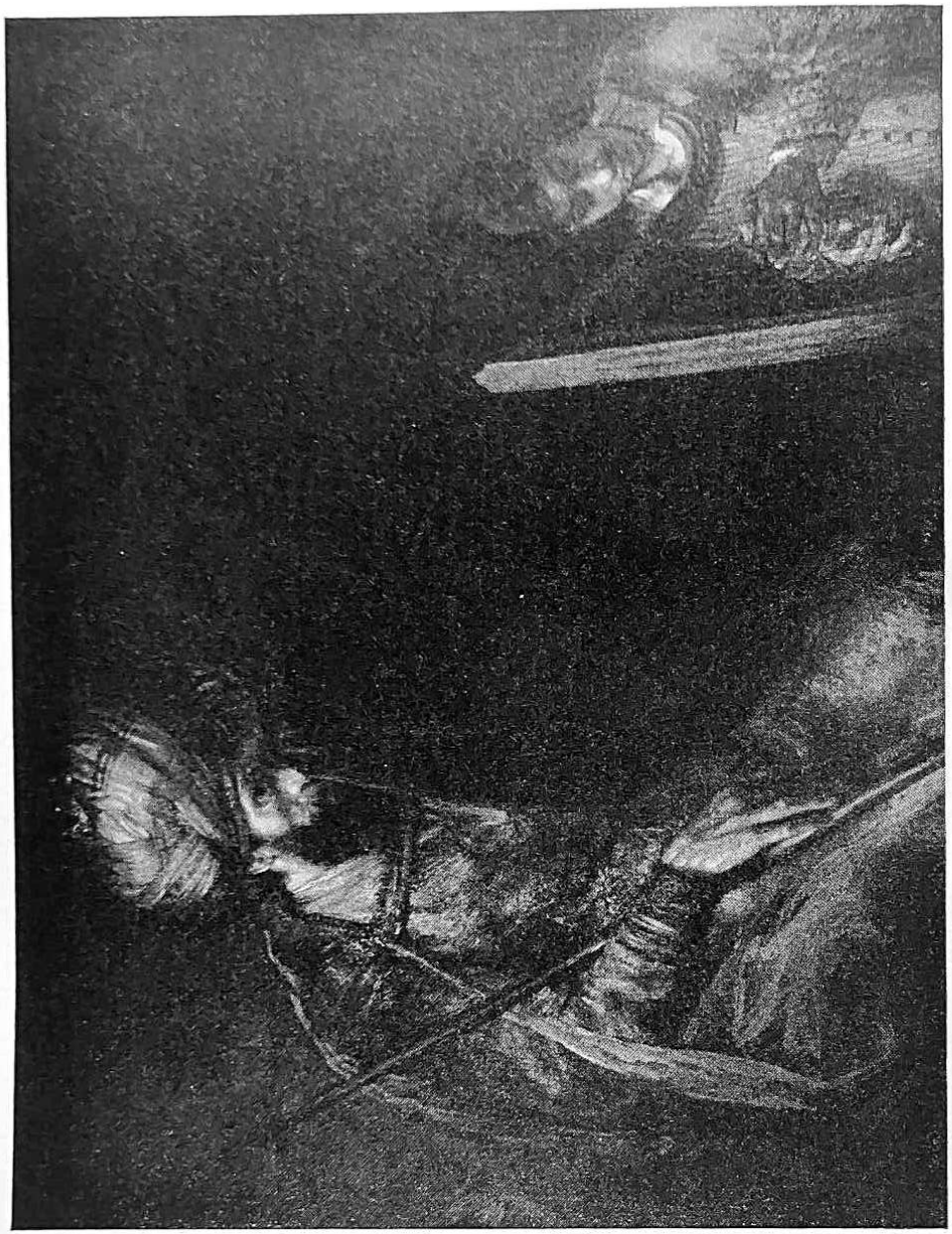

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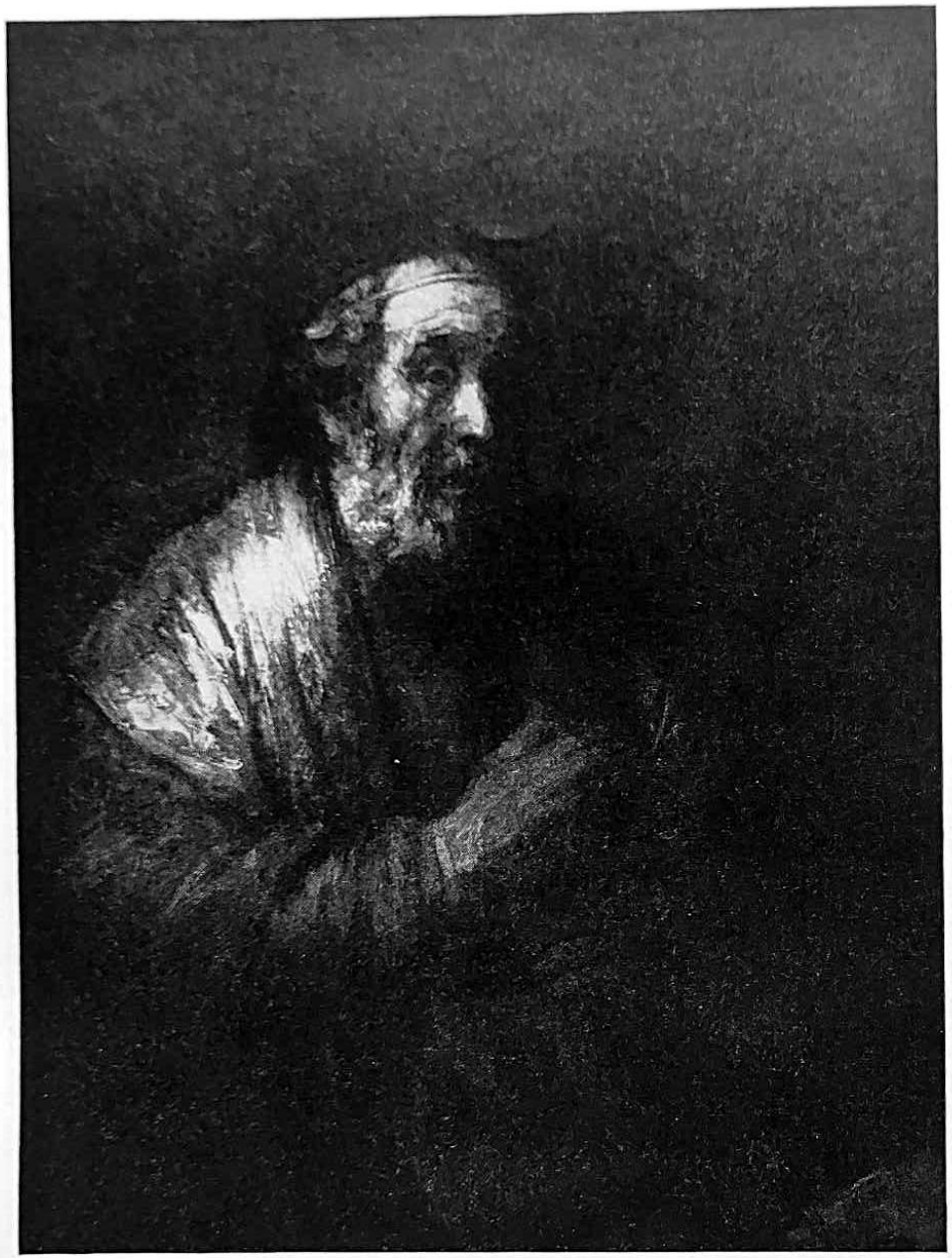

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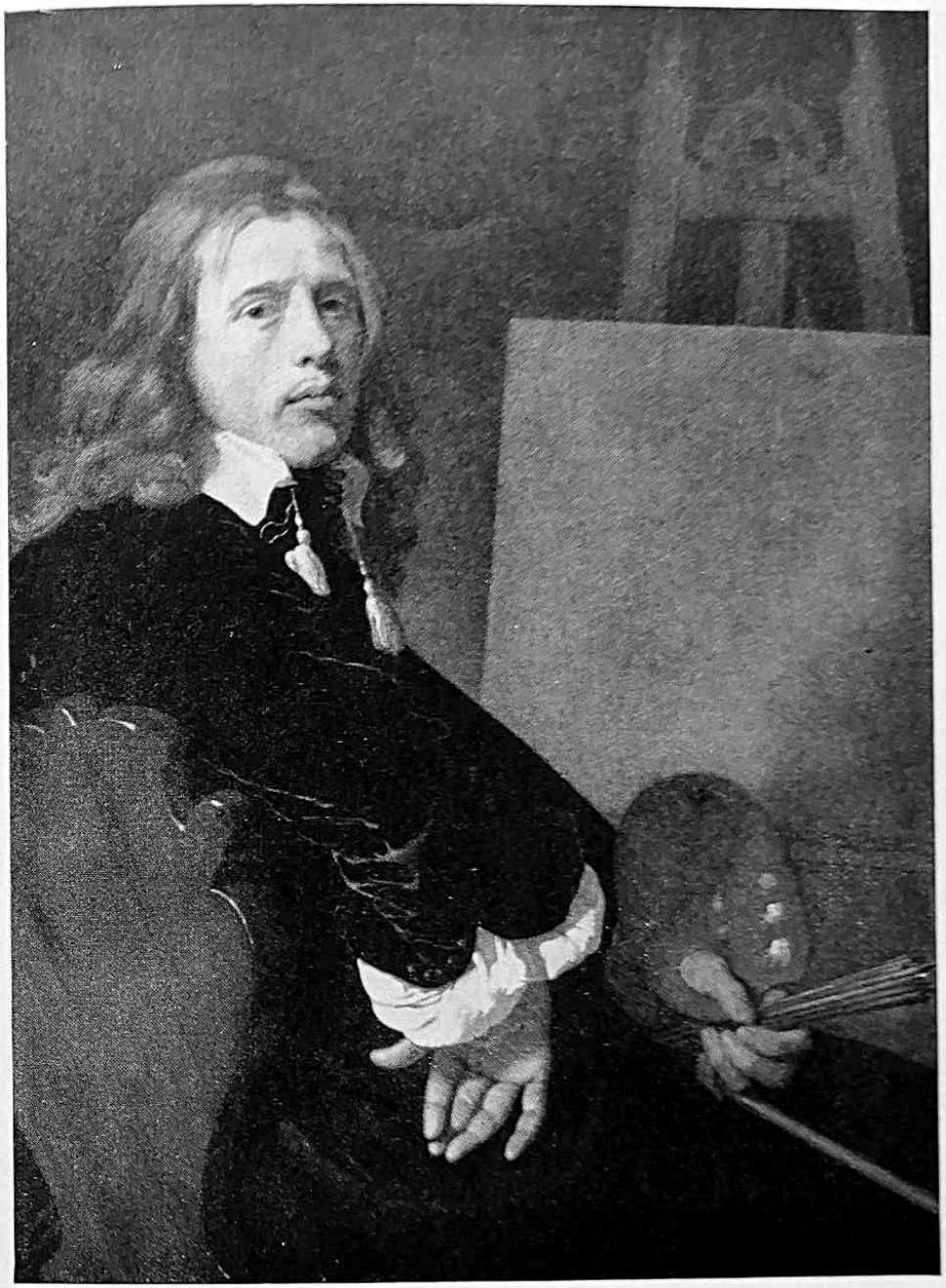

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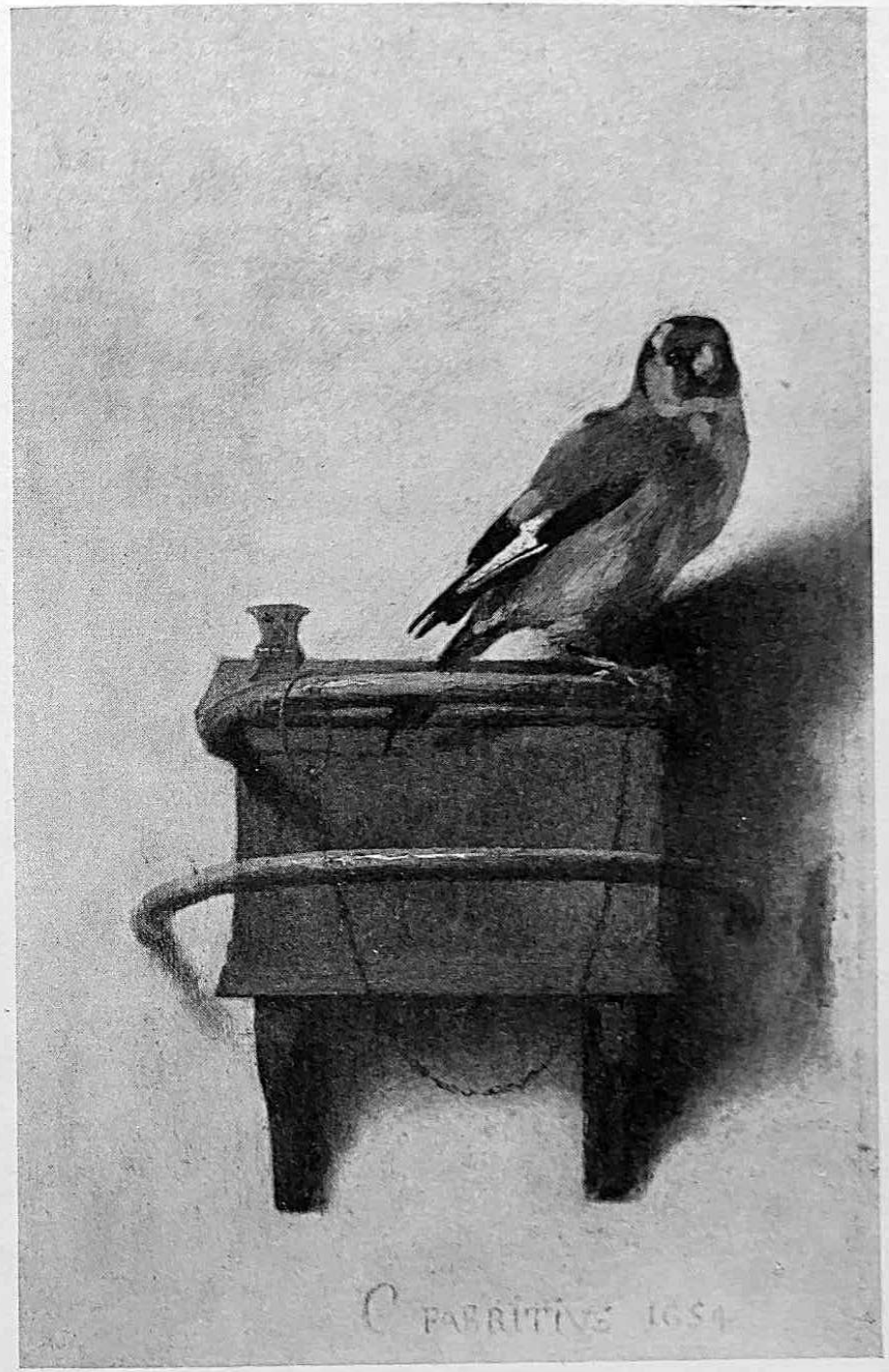

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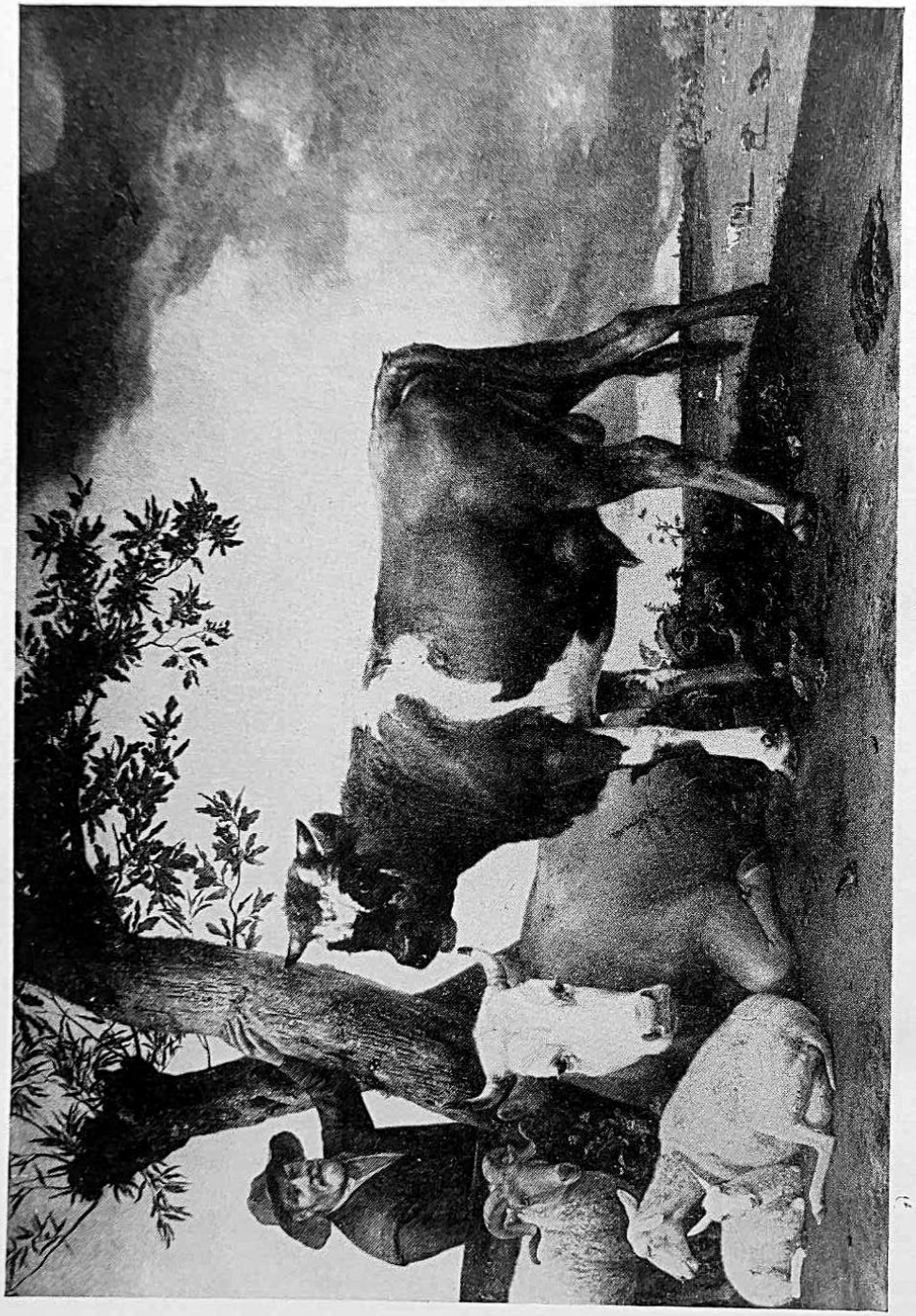

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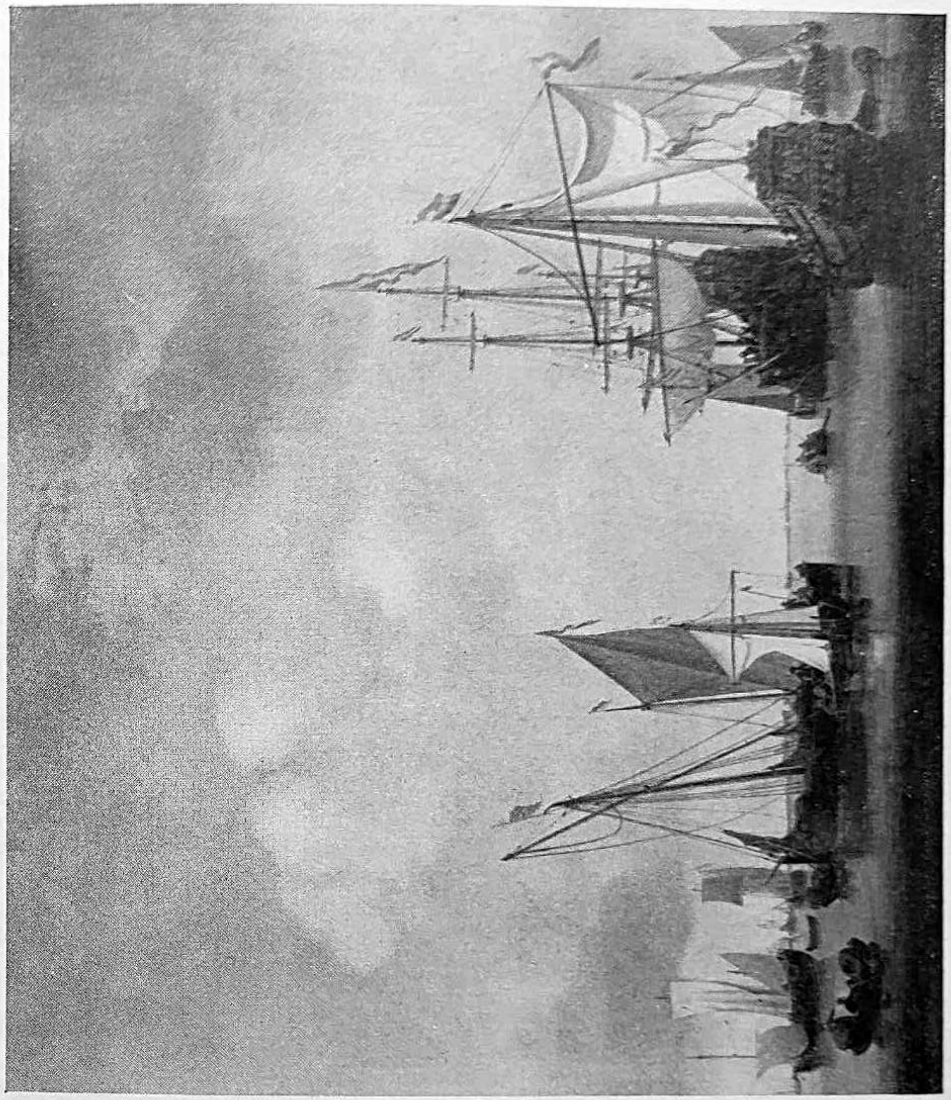

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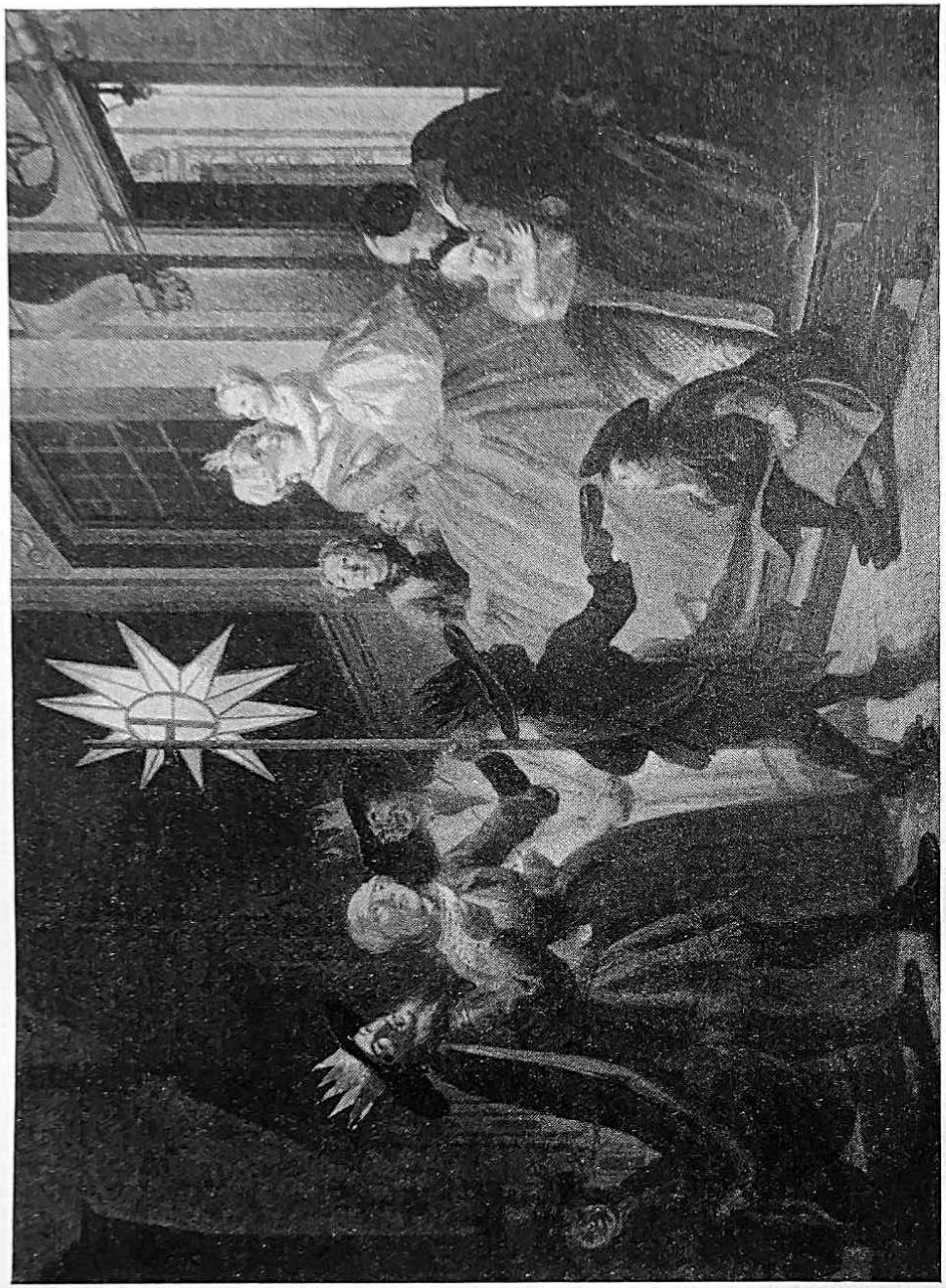

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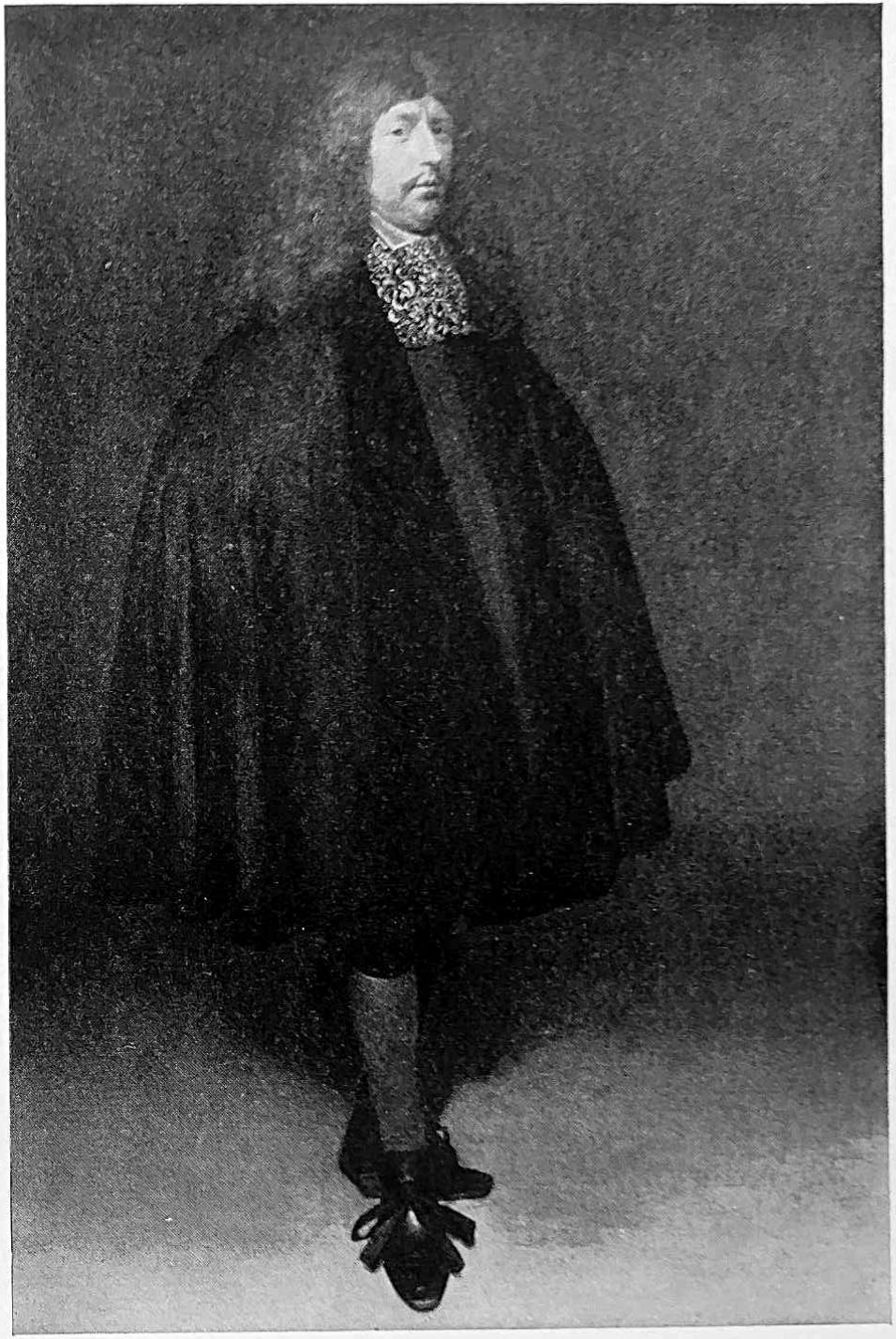

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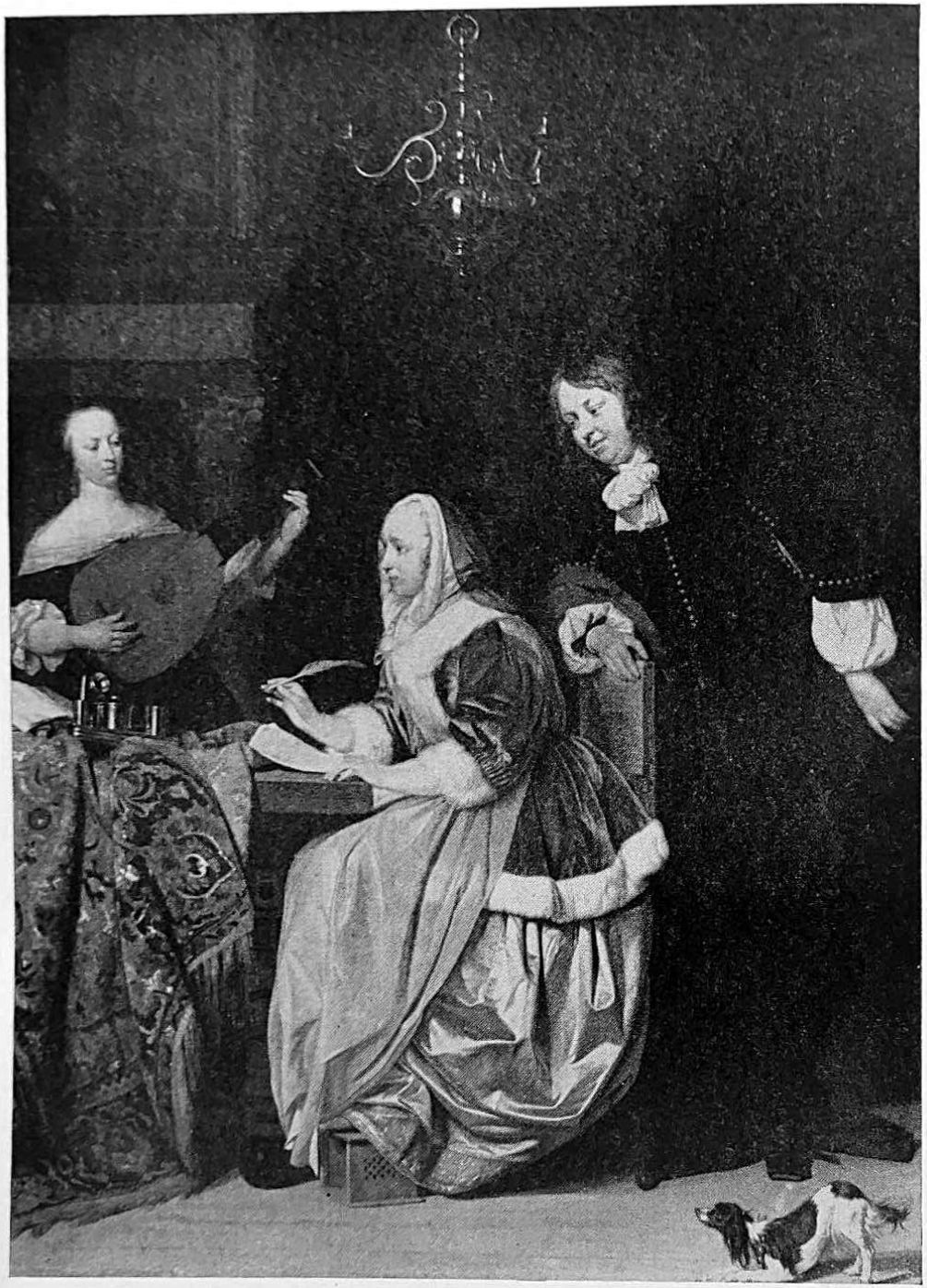

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